

AFRICA NEWS REPORT



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AEF504 01/16/2004

Bush Issues Executive Order on Sierra Leone and Liberia

(Action terminates national emergency declared in 2001) (550)
President Bush has signed an executive order terminating the national emergency he declared in 2001 with respect to Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Following is the text of the order, released January 16 by the White House:

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
January 16, 2004
EXECUTIVE ORDER

TERMINATION OF EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO SIERRA LEONE AND LIBERIA

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.), the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) (NEA), and section 5 of the United Nations Participation Act of 1945, as amended (22 U.S.C. 287c),

I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, find that the situations that gave rise to the declaration of a national emergency in Executive Order 13194 of January 18, 2001, with respect to Sierra Leone and the expansion of the scope of that emergency in Executive Order 13213 of May 22, 2001, with respect to Liberia, have been significantly altered given that in January 2002 the Government of Sierra Leone, the Sierra Leonean rebel group Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone declared the war in Sierra Leone to have ended; the parties to the Liberian civil war entered into a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in August 2003; the RUF no longer exists as a military organization; Charles Taylor, who was the prime instigator of violence both in Sierra Leone and in Liberia, has resigned from the Liberian presidency and gone into exile; the Government of Sierra Leone has established a rough diamond certification regime that meets the minimum standards of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme; and the United States has implemented the Clean Diamond Trade Act (Public Law 108-19), prohibiting the importation into the United States of rough diamonds that are not controlled through the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme, currently including rough diamonds from Liberia. Accordingly, I hereby terminate the national emergency declared and expanded in scope in those two prior orders, revoke those orders, and further order:

Section 1. Pursuant to section 202 of the NEA (50 U.S.C. 1622), termination of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13194 and expanded in scope in Executive Order 13213 shall not affect any action taken or proceeding pending not finally concluded or determined as of the effective date of this order, or any action or proceeding based on any act committed prior to such date, or any rights or duties that matured or penalties that were incurred prior to such date.

Sec. 2. This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities, or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

Sec. 3. This order is effective at 12:01 a.m. eastern standard time on January 16, 2004. This order shall be transmitted to the Congress and published in the Federal Register.

GEORGE W. BUSH

THE WHITE HOUSE, January 15, 2004.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF401 01/08/2004

Powell Cites Progress in Sudan, Hope for Liberia

(Tells news conference diplomacy takes time, dedication) (340)
Looking back on some noteworthy foreign policy issues of 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell at a January 8 news conference mentioned a hallmark of progress in the Sudan and hope for the people of Liberia.

Following are excerpts from his briefing:

"We've seen progress in the Sudan. You saw an announcement the other day where the negotiators in Lake Naivasha in Kenya have come to an agreement on wealth sharing. There are just one or two outstanding issues, difficult issues, having to do with disputed territories. But the key here is that after 20 years of the most terrible war, Sudanese leaders have come together and are just one or two steps short of having a comprehensive peace agreement that will bring peace to Sudan."

He continued, saying that he is "pleased that the United States, through the President's personal involvement, the work of Senator Danforth and the work of a number of people here in the Department and over at the NSC (National Security Council), have brought us to this point.

"Diplomacy doesn't happen overnight. It takes time. It takes dedication. It takes being prepared to accept some slipbacks as you move forward. But we see an improvement in the situation in the Sudan."

On Liberia, Powell said "(Charles) Taylor is gone. And we worked with friend and partners in Africa and in the UN to cause that to happen, and provided just a touch of military presence and military force to ensure that Taylor would depart and that the Liberian people would be given a new opportunity.

"We've used our alliances in such an important set of ways, whether it's working with our NATO allies to expand the NATO alliance, whether it's working with the EU as they expand the European Union, working with our West African friends in Liberia, working directly with the Russians a few weeks ago as we dealt with a challenging situation in Georgia and Tbilisi."

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF501 01/16/2004

Trade and Investment Top U.S.-Africa Policy Agenda

(Democracy, development and the environment are other priorities, says Snyder) (1210)

By Charles W. Corey

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Throughout the current Bush Administration, trade and investment has topped the policy agenda and as such, plays a pre-eminent role in the U.S.-Africa relationship that has "matured" over the past

few years, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Charles R. Snyder told reporters January 15.

Briefing the press at the State Department's Foreign Press Center in Washington, Snyder said, "we put trade and investment

at the top of the list because we really do believe that the answer to bringing Africa into the world and into the modern economy is (increasingly) trade and investment. And so we decided to focus on that."

The promotion of democracy and development -- which traditionally headed-up the U.S.-Africa policy priority list -- he said, was moved to second place. A focus on the environment is in third place, he said.

"When we came in and decided to push trade and investment, we said we would hold our traditional development and democracy budget harmless (and thus maintain its budget); we would pursue this trade and investment agenda, AGOA II and other things such as a special initiative to get sovereign credit debt ratings for many African countries."

Over the last ten years, Snyder told his audience, the United States has given between \$800 million and a \$1 billion a year to Africa in developmental terms -- including some money for HIV/AIDS. While maintaining that part of the budget, we have looked to do new things in trade and investment, he said.

A third Africa policy priority under this current Bush administration has been the environment, Snyder noted. As part of that effort, he said, the administration has promoted the Congo Basin Initiative to protect "one of the lungs of the world" and maintain the Congo Basin for Africa eco-tourism and the world as well.

Snyder quickly cautioned, however, that progress on trade and investment, democracy and development and the environment cannot be achieved without also addressing "crosscutting issues," like global terrorism in the post-9/11 world.

"There is a front to be fought in Africa," Snyder told his audience. "It is not the Number 1 or the Number 2 priority, but it is a priority in the global war on terrorism. You couldn't have won World War II without fighting in the China-Burma-India theater, and that's a fair enough analogy. Africa's an important front in this war, but it's not a crucial front."

Snyder reminded everyone of President Bush's \$100 million counter-terrorism initiative in the Horn of Africa, which "is really about improving the system of border control, police, better sharing of information -- that kind of thing. It's not targeted at some grandiose crusade to nail down two or three al-Qaeda cells, although hopefully, that'll be one of the results of that initiative."

The global war on terrorism also extends into West Africa, he said. "The old camel caravan route coming down from Libya all the way through Mauritania is an area of interest and an area of trouble, which extremists can use and we're paying attention...."

An end to terrorism is important to Africa's economic development, he said. "If terrorists can blow you up, you can't do trade and development. No businessman is safe, no contract is honored, and therefore the trade and investment initiative just doesn't work."

A second major crosscutting issue, Snyder identified is HIV/AIDS. "If you don't get a handle on HIV/AIDS, you're kidding yourself about development. If you have to train three teachers to get one survivor, you're just wasting your money, ultimately."

Snyder also called attention to the "cultural damage" factor, which is a natural outgrowth of the HIV/AIDS problem.

"One of the reasons the drought in Ethiopia was so bad recently was because the farmer that had seen this cyclical drought before was gone. So was his wife -- victims of HIV/AIDS. And what you got were the very young and the very old dealing with the drought

"So there's a real cultural residual wealth dimension to this HIV/AIDS problem that people miss sometimes, and it's just as insidious as the more transparent thing -- training three teachers to get one."

President Bush, through his \$15 billion HIV/AIDS initiative for Africa and the Caribbean, decided to do something about the pandemic, Snyder said. That initiative, the official explained, "proves our commitment" to fighting the deadly virus. The \$15 billion initiative, he reminded everyone, is in addition to the U.S. HIV/AIDS efforts already under way and represents serious money. "You can't do development or trade and investment unless you get a handle on HIV/AIDS in Africa," Snyder warned.

A third broad issue Snyder identified for Africa is conflict resolution, noting that in that area, there has been some success. "Again, development is a joke if there's war, if you have refugees, if nothing is dependable, if systems don't work. And we've done our best to do some things about the conflicts in Africa."

The Sudan policy is part of that, he said. "We took a fresh look at that and tried to do it differently. When we started this administration -- I won't kid you -- we were looking at the crisis in Sierra Leone as conflict resolution. We managed to get a handle on that, and then Liberia sprung up. And now we've just barely -- but we do -- have a handle on, the crisis in Liberia. But you can't do development if you can't stop the conflicts."

Snyder pointed to the Congo as "one of the secret success stories" that has gone virtually unnoticed.

"Given where we were when we started, the Congo is actually a place where there's some hope for development. Certainly the political advancement inside the Congo has finally begun to move after that Lusaka Agreement that was made long ago, way back in 1994. It's finally coming to fruition."

"We've played our share behind the scenes," Snyder acknowledged. "The Europeans have taken a big lead, but Africa has taken the biggest lead," through the Lusaka Agreement.

When Africans take the lead on African issues, that should not be overlooked, he said. "What we did in Sudan when we looked around for a way to intervene effectively was to build on what Africa had already done. The Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) had engaged in this, cleared the ground and allowed the United States -- by throwing its weight into it -- to advance the process...."

Looking ahead to what is to be done in the administration's remaining year in its first term, Snyder concluded, "Obviously, we have to finish what we started. We have to finish Sudan. We have to see that Liberia gets past the post in better shape than when we found it. And, you know, there are some crises out there now that we can't even anticipate that we'll have to do a lot about. We're also hoping to continue the trade and investment portions of this, looking at new enhancements toward the AGOA legislation, that kind of thing. That's where we are."

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF301 01/14/2004

Acting Asst. Secretary Snyder Outlines U.S.-Africa Policy Priorities

(State Department Africa team focused on "finishing business") (840)

By Charles W. Corey

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- With one year left in President Bush's current term, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Charles R. Snyder said his team will be focusing on "finishing business," and maybe taking on one or two new priority projects.

At a December 9 meeting with journalists in his State Department office, Snyder cited three priorities that his team hopes to bring to completion this year: peace in Sudan; an expansion of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA); and an increase in the number of African countries that enjoy sovereign debt credit ratings.

"The big thing to finish, of course, is Sudan -- do a little more on the sovereign debt credit rating issue and see if we can't get an AGOA III through the Congress with a few more features," Snyder told reporters.

Additionally, Snyder suggested, "We probably have time to take on one or two new things," as time and resources permit. Those project priorities are yet to be determined, he said.

On Sudan, Snyder said, "When you look at the policy side of the house, the big one ... is Sudan. Could we get to where we want to go on Sudan with regards to terrorism and on changing the human rights [situation] in the South?" he rhetorically asked the journalists. "I think we are at the edge of getting a final deal there. ..."

"One of the keys to success" in Sudan, he explained, "is actually falling in behind the work already done by the Africans, reinvigorating it, and taking it further" to include new expanded measures.

Time and time again, he said, United States policy is most effective when it works to complement African efforts already underway across the continent.

Snyder, who assumed his present office on November 1, 2003, said that under the direction of his predecessor, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Walter Kansteiner, the State Department's Africa team also viewed trade and finance as a special priority.

"With Walter's background [as an investment banker], obviously, a lot of time was focused on the trade and investment side of the house," specifically the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and securing credit ratings for African countries, he said.

A major achievement during Kansteiner's tenure, Snyder recalled, was the passage of AGOA II, which has had a "real impact" in permitting increased imports of African goods into the United States.

"One of the things Walter wanted to do was have an impact on trade, and I think he did," Snyder said.

A third Kansteiner priority, according to Snyder, was the securing of an actual sovereign debt credit rating for as many African countries as possible. "Those of us who were not experts were a bit amused by this in the beginning," Snyder admitted, "but it has actually had an impact. Sixteen [African] countries now have sovereign debt credit ratings -- most of which we assisted in getting -- as opposed to four African countries when he [Kansteiner] assumed office.

"Why does this matter?" Snyder asked. "In many cases, some funds -- market funds and investment funds -- can't invest in countries without some basic credit rating ... so it actually has had an impact."

As an investment banker, Kansteiner brought unique skills to the State Department and thus spearheaded the effort to establish credit ratings for many African countries. Even though Kansteiner has returned to the private sector, Snyder said, "the program is still marching on. Several more [ratings] will be done over the course of this year," he pledged.

In closing, Snyder mentioned Sierra Leone as another area in which the United States "had impact by design" during Kansteiner's tenure.

"Finishing up the disaster [economic and political turmoil after the war] in Sierra Leone" was a major priority, he said. "We did a lot of work on that."

Additionally, he cited the Congo as another area of focus. "The Congo has actually been quite a success," he said. "It is still far from 100 percent. It is still far from economically recovered. But there is now a functional government there and we played our part in that. A lot of diplomatic heavy lifting and chipping in our fair share of aid, etc., at the right point" helped in that effort.

"It was a team effort -- clearly the Europeans did a lot of this. The Africans did most of this, but we fell in behind [them] where it counted. The Congo is kind of bubbling along" as a success story in its own right, he said.

Snyder assumed his new duties as acting assistant secretary of state for African affairs after serving as principal deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs, where he managed the State Department's Africa Bureau on a daily basis. In that position, Snyder also served as the central policy person for the Sudan peace initiative and helped direct U.S. policy for the southern Africa region.

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AEF502 01/16/2004

Boston U. Center Educating Americans About New Directions in Africa

(APARC's Amb. Stith talks about African leaders' contributions) (940)

By Jim Fisher-Thompson

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Although he came very close to being blown up by a terrorist bomb in Tanzania during his one and only stint as a top U.S. diplomat, Charles R. Stith is determined to educate Americans about Africa and the positive changes taking place there -- and he is using a visionary organization he helped found two years ago to do it.

[Ambassador Stith arrived in Dar es Salaam just weeks after a truck bomb linked to the al Qaeda terrorist network destroyed the U.S. Embassy there on August 7, 1998 killing 10 Africans. A simultaneous attack on the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi killed 212 Africans and 12 Americans in what some observers say was the opening salvo in a war on America and its allies by Muslim extremists.]

Speaking recently by phone from his office at Boston University, Stith told the Washington File that his fledgling organization, the African Presidential Archives and Research Center (APARC), represents "an unprecedented and unique approach for studying

democratization and free market reform in Africa and educating Americans about those changes." He said the idea for APARC developed as a result of his many conversations with President Benjamin Mkapa and former President Julius Nyerere during his stay in Tanzania.

Now, APARC, as well as providing a repository of relevant documents about Africa for use by researchers, also features a residency program for past African heads of state. Former Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda (1964-1991) was the first Resident, speaking to U.S. audiences about changes on the continent and helping convene a roundtable of former African presidents during his yearlong tenure at Boston University. "Getting former heads of state together is an idea that has been batted around for decades," Stith explained.

"And with President Kaunda here to provide some leadership we got an extraordinary response." A replacement for Kaunda in the residency program will be named soon, the American added.

Other APARC programs and events scheduled for this year include the second annual roundtable of African leaders in Boston April 27-28. And in November APARC plans to host a videoconference of former African leaders in Atlanta that will be broadcast digitally worldwide. The Atlanta project, done in conjunction with Morehouse University, will be partially funded by a \$250,000 grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Stith, who also is a minister with a degree from the Harvard University Divinity School, highlighted the importance of inputs from African leaders in the APARC program saying, "It provides valuable opportunities to see African development through the eyes of the architects who designed economic and political changes" on the continent.

He said his organization's mission to show Americans how Africa is changing is timely now because it comes after decades of socialistic economic policies and authoritarianism that beggared the continent. "Africans are [finally] coming to realize the value of free-market reforms and democratization," Stith said.

During his stint as U.S. envoy in Tanzania Stith made it a priority to promote U.S. trade and investment in Africa. In doing so he managed to successfully negotiate code-share [alliance] agreements for Delta and Northwest Airlines to fly into the country and arranged for Tanzania to sign the first ever Open Skies Agreement between an African country and the United States.

One result of this new focus by African leaders is that "an immense amount of intellectual power is being released in Africa now" based on a growing vision of freedom and prosperity, using homegrown entrepreneurial skills and business as an engine for change, the former diplomat explained.

Describing how the Cold War played out on the continent as a battle for the heart and soul of Africans, Stith said, "This was a political and even economic dynamic that was in many ways a hot war being fought on African soil. The style and direction of governance that you saw during that period" was also often closely allied with the command economies and totalitarian governments of the East.

To be fair, Stith said, Africans like Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and other post-independence leaders "felt the necessity to try to level the playing field [economically] as quickly as possible. So one could argue whether it was prudent to have moved down the path of socialism but what is inarguable was that the pressure to do something, and do something dramatic, was overwhelming."

Turning back to the present, Stith said "the most significant goal for us in the next year is to keep monitoring the

progress African nations are making on political and economic reforms." Because of growing transparency in governance in Africa and the new connection APARC has with former leaders "countries now pop up on our radar screen in ways they hadn't prior to the changes."

"For example, our 'State of Africa Report' last year featured 13 countries. This year Kenya will be included in the mix because it reflects the changes that took place in the last election" where the ruling party's candidate lost the presidency in a free and open ballot, Stith added.

Stith said he would make a trip to Africa in February where he will meet with various top government officials and heads of universities to discuss the work of APARC. The countries he will make stops in are: Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia, Botswana, Mauritius and Ghana. The purpose of the trip, he said, will be "to continue to chronicle what's going on in terms of development on the continent -- both politically and economically."

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF202 01/13/2004

West Africa Poised to Be Key U.S. Natural Gas Supplier

(ChevronTexaco executive discusses intricacies of supplying liquefied natural gas) (1140)

By Charles W. Corey

Washington File Staff Writer

Houston, Texas -- West Africa is poised to be a key supplier of natural gas to help meet ever-expanding U.S. energy demands, says Bill Hauhe, manager of global liquefied natural gas (LNG) market development at ChevronTexaco.

Speaking at a recent LNG workshop at the second annual Africa Oil and Gas Conference, sponsored by the Corporate Council on Africa in Houston, Texas, Hauhe said the United States is currently importing natural gas from Canada because U.S. demand now outstrips U.S. production. Demand for natural gas in the United States is predicted to increase year after year, he said.

(The United States Department of Energy recently forecast that by 2025, natural gas produced on the North American continent will meet only 75 percent of U.S. demand, thus further fueling the need for greater natural gas imports.)

"In North America the question is not market capacity," Hauhe told his audience. "To us [at ChevronTexaco] that is not the issue. The issue is how do you get LNG into the United States? There are only four LNG receiving terminals in existence right now," he said: Everett, Massachusetts, outside Boston; Cove Point, Maryland; Elba Island, Georgia; and Lake Charles, Louisiana.

"Several others are being proposed," he said, "and for us, we are proposing our own LNG terminal," known as Port Pelican, which ChevronTexaco expects to complete within the decade.

ChevronTexaco's proposed Port Pelican LNG terminal -- which will be located 37 miles offshore in the Gulf of Mexico -- Hauhe said, will utilize existing pipelines and infrastructure to efficiently bring liquefied natural gas into the United States.

"We will be able to bring in ships from the Atlantic Basin, tie them up offshore, offload the ships' LNG supply into storage, regassify it [reconverting it to gas from the liquefied form in which it is shipped], and send it onshore [via pipeline]. For us, we see that as the key issue."

(LNG is natural gas cooled to minus 259 degrees Fahrenheit. The cold temperature shrinks the gas into liquid form

so it can be transported aboard double-hulled tankers. The LNG is then regasified and fed into existing natural gas pipelines for distribution.)

Hauhe reminded his audience that ChevronTexaco is Africa's largest U.S.-based private investor, operating in more than 50 countries on the continent. It was ChevronTexaco, he said, that scored the first offshore oil discoveries in both Angola and Nigeria. He said the company plans to invest up to \$20 billion on the African continent over the next five years.

Hauhe called LNG production a "catalyst for positive change" across the continent, noting that ChevronTexaco is hoping to export large amounts of LNG from its production operations located offshore of Nigeria and Angola.

Special challenges come with the development of natural gas fields, he said. "The challenge of [developing] gas as opposed to oil is that it usually has to be developed in very large volumes to justify the economics of the long-distance transportation" and infrastructure needed, he explained.

"Unless there is a local indigenous demand for that gas, the gas that is produced must find a market or be reinjected into the ground. The processing and transportation of needed gas to distant markets, he said, "requires vast sums of capital, specialized equipment, infrastructure, and special expertise."

For distances up to about 2,000 kilometers, he said, pipelines are usually the most economical way to move gas to market. For longer distances, such as between West Africa and North America, he said, special double-hulled LNG ships are the preferred option.

The construction of needed LNG infrastructure, Hauhe explained, will allow for the expansion of domestic gas utilization across the North American market.

Hauhe went on to outline what both host governments and investors are expecting to gain from the development of natural gas projects across Africa.

With natural gas, he said, host African governments are expecting to utilize gas revenues to achieve sustainable development. "They want something that is not just going to last for six years and go away. We are talking about decades of development and sustainability for the economy. Also, they want to see ... something done about developing and further enhancing their own energy resources."

From an investor perspective, Hauhe said, ChevronTexaco seeks host governments that will be supportive of LNG projects as they are developed. "These are long-term projects," he reminded everyone, "so we would like to see the governments there standing behind these projects and supporting them."

Acceptable price structures and predictable commercial and financing terms in the host country are also essential to any successful project, he said, because the natural gas price must be competitive worldwide.

Any new project needs to be competitive, he said, adding that market prices for LNG dictate the terms of the deal. "You will basically sell at no higher, no lower than the market -- and that is constantly changing," he said, which poses an "ongoing dynamic" between the buyer and the seller on pricing.

In that regard, he said, "we want to make sure that each individual project is competitive within a portfolio of projects. We want to ensure that each project is robust for the company and partners, including the government if they take an equity stake."

What is also important, he said, is attention to the market. "LNG buyers can never be forgotten. The four key issues are reserves, and market, market, and market. LNG has to have a place

to go. It is not a fungible [interchangeable] commodity like oil is yet."

"In the world today, oil can go to any one of hundreds of refineries around the world. You put it in an oil tanker and it can go basically anywhere, and in fact, cargoes are diverted all the time -- bought and sold many times on the water -- and end up anywhere. It is traded on an international market basis... Everybody can pretty much use it."

LNG markets are more limited, however. "There are not that many places where you can deliver LNG" because of the extensive infrastructure required, he said.

Speaking for ChevronTexaco, Hauhe said his company looks for long-term relationships of 20 years or more. He then outlined the challenges for LNG projects, reminding everyone that LNG projects are unique and different from oil projects.

"In oil projects, you develop those operations knowing that you will have a place to put your oil," he said. "In LNG projects, you don't necessarily know that, so you need to develop the commercial arrangements simultaneously with the technical and reserve-type activities so you can effectively develop a project."

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF201 01/13/2004

Improved Security in Liberia Heralds More Support for Development Funding

(Officials speak in advance of international donor conference) (830)

By James Fisher-Thompson

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The security situation in war-torn Liberia has improved enough to start planning for more long-range development assistance, according to Department of Defense and Department of State officials who are involved in supporting the 8,700 peacekeepers in the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). They spoke in advance of a donor's conference on Liberia set for early February.

After providing more than \$8.2 million on humanitarian assistance to Liberia and \$26 million in military-related assistance to ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) and U.N. forces in 2003, the U.S. government is poised to spend a further \$245 million for peacekeeping and \$200 million dollars on humanitarian assistance to the West African nation, according to Colonel Victor Nelson, director for West Africa in the Defense Department Office of International Security Affairs.

The funding for peacekeeping was vital to support the ECOWAS/UN intervention in the summer of 2003 that -- with the help of a limited number of U.S. ground forces -- helped stem the violence in the West African nation.

Nelson said security funding was still an important issue because the UNMIL force is due to almost double to 15,000 troops in February when the international reconstruction conference on Liberia will take place. The career soldier said he plans to visit Liberia later this month to assess security needs in the region.

"The U.S. government" he said, "is currently discussing next steps with U.N. special representative [Jacques] Klein in Liberia" about how the new U.S. funding can best be used.

In Congress, he said, there were differing opinions about whether more money should go to "security sector reform" or be spent on "more humanitarian-related things. Our position right now

in the Inter-agency [Working Group on Liberia] is that if you don't have security, all the money you spend on humanitarian efforts will go down the drain if fighting is renewed," he explained.

According to the State Department, U.S. assistance to Liberia, besides providing humanitarian relief, will also include developmental goals: resettlement of refugees; reintegration of former combatants, especially child soldiers; community revitalization and providing basic social services; reconstructing police and judicial structures; establishing an independent media; military reform; forest sector rehabilitation; and support to the Central Bank.

The civil war in Liberia that began in 1989 came to an end in 2003 when a peace agreement brokered among the warring parties and groups called for President Charles Taylor to yield power and depart to Nigeria. The peace came about, in part, because of an ECOWAS-backed intervention force of West African troops, some of whom had been trained by the U.S. Army.

Colonel Nelson, former U.S. Defense Attaché in Nigeria, had helped organize the training of several battalions of Nigerian troops in the fall of 2001 in Operation Focus Relief (OFR), some of whom were later used for peace enforcement duties in the region. The Nigerian force that was rapidly deployed to Monrovia to stop the killing "got rave reviews for their abilities and comportment," said Nelson. "Also, other elements that had received OFR training and a Ghanaian contingent, which had received ACOTA (Africa Contingency Operations Training Assistance) program training, all did very well."

[ACOTA is the follow-on program to the highly successful African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), which helped train the armies of seven African nations in peacekeeping operations while enhancing their overall professional skills as security forces supporting democracies.]

Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Charles Snyder believes Liberia is doing well "given where it was -- that it was a totally failed state. You can now see the way forward. The U.N. is beginning to get some traction on the ground."

Snyder was hopeful after his recent meeting with U.N. Special Representative Klein. "Clearly, Klein is very much an activist and he has a rational plan, which is what we were hoping for. He is talking about reestablishing the rule of law as the U.N. forces move out."

In that light, Snyder said "the upcoming donor's conference is so important" in generating the money needed for the rebuilding process. To that end the U.S. government continues to cooperate with the United Nations and other international organizations to provide humanitarian aid aimed at refugees and other war-affected populations in Liberia.

In addition, the United States also provides funding for the civilian police mission in Liberia, for the U.N. Development Program's reintegration efforts for 3,500 ex-combatants, and for two Treasury Department advisors to the National Transitional Government of Liberia.

The State Department notes that other foreign contributions to stability in Liberia include \$42 from the European Union (EU). Meanwhile, the Scandinavian nations, Canada, Japan, China and other donors have offered to contribute to the Liberia reconstruction effort.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF402 01/15/2004

U.N. Officials Express High Hopes for Peace in Liberia

(8,000 Liberians turned in weapons as pledge to demobilize) (720)

By Judy Aita

Washington File United Nations Correspondent

United Nations -- "The overall political and security situation in Liberia is daily growing more stable and, I believe, it is now irreversible," the U.N. special representative to Liberia, Jacques Klein said January 15.

The secretary-general's special representative and head of the U.N. Mission in Liberia told a press conference that he attributes his optimism to the fact that "the Liberian people themselves are committed to the peace process and are determined not to have this opportunity slip away.

"The prospects for success are greater today than at any time in Liberia's recent past," the U.N. official said.

Klein was at U.N. headquarters to attend the final planning session for an international donors' conference for Liberia scheduled for early February.

"It is incumbent on the international community to assist Liberians in this critical juncture in their history," Klein said. "As we are all aware, stabilizing Liberia will not only be imperative for its people, but for the region as a whole. Liberia is the key to political stability in West Africa. If we fail in Liberia, I need not spell out the consequences for the region."

Klein used an example to indicate the improved prospects for peace: At a recent demobilization day, U.N. peacekeepers were expecting 800 to 1,200 fighters to show up to turn over their weapons and register for re-integration programs. Instead, 8,000 showed up. Already more than 12,000 -- 30 percent of the total number of combatants -- have turned in their weapons.

Unfortunately, he said, the United Nations will not be able to do a thorough job of demobilization until the peacekeeping operation reaches its full strength of 15,000 peacekeepers at the beginning of March.

U.N. experts and World Bank and International Monetary Fund officials met with the representatives of more than 20 nations and private aid agencies as well as Liberian officials January 15 to make final preparations for the two-day donors' conference that will be held February 5 and 6. The conference aims to raise more than \$400 million that will be needed over the next two years for the reconstruction of Liberia.

Julia Taft, assistant administrator of the U.N. Development Program (UNDP), termed the teamwork shown in the two-month process of reviewing the country's needs and preparing the report and a practical plan to make the most use of donor contributions in time for February conference "incredible."

"Never before has one team worked in such great harmony in looking at the building blocks of getting out of conflict," Taft said of.

She estimated that when the plans are finalized between \$400 and \$500 million will be needed for reconstruction projects in addition to the \$170 million already requested for humanitarian needs.

The United States has indicated that it will pledge \$200 million to the U.N.-coordinated reconstruction projects in addition to its bilateral aid, she said.

The amount of money is not large compared to what the United Nations has estimated is needed for Iraq or Afghanistan, but it is the amount that Liberia, a country of 3.3 million people, can absorb effectively over the two-year period, the U.N. officials said.

"We are talking about ... rebuilding an electrical grid, telephone structure, raising seven ships out of the harbor, rebuilding the port of Monrovia, education, health care," Klein said. "When we talk about the numbers, we are not trying to rebuild Paris or London here. We're trying to build the basic infrastructure of Liberia to make it function. That is the goal."

"There is general regional support," the U.N. envoy said. "They understand the necessity for stabilizing Liberia and having this become a functioning state because this will be the last chance."

Noting that the international community has helped rebuild Liberia twice before, Klein asked, "How many more times are we going to do this?"

"So this is the last chance -- which means [we need] a serious team, a serious effort, very serious studies -- properly focused -- not just gross dollar figures. And then, I think, we will be on the road" to peace and stability in Liberia.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF302 01/14/2004

Top U.S. Health Official Seeks Hope and Partnerships In Africa

(HHS's C. Allen visiting Nigeria, Ghana, Malawi and Tanzania) (820)

By Jim Fisher-Thompson

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Claude Allen is passionate about three things: his family, his work to provide greater health care opportunities for Americans and, now, U.S. partnerships with African organizations to fight HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases that continue to ravage the continent.

On the eve of a January 15-27 fact-finding mission to Africa, Allen told the Washington File, "I view this as an important mission of compassion. I have great hope (for the future) and much of that hope lies within the Africans and their communities themselves. But there is also great hope based on the partnerships the United States is willing to commit to in fighting disease on the continent."

Allen's trip to Africa comes only a month after the Secretary for HHS, Tommy Thompson, traveled to the continent with a large delegation of health care experts and businessmen, to assess needs and challenges there both as a USG official and as chairman of the U.N.'s Global Fund for HIV/AIDS that has raised billions of dollars to combat the disease in Africa. As the HHS chief operating officer, Allen concentrates on health policy and management issues, but he also oversees a budget -- one larger than the Defense Department -- that includes health programs for Africa operated by the Centers for Disease Control and National Institute of Health.

He is making this official trip to assess healthcare needs and to discuss ongoing assistance partnerships that HHS has helped fund in Nigeria, Ghana, Malawi and Tanzania with more than \$35 million in 2003.

Allen said, "We'll be meeting with heads of state in Nigeria and Ghana and will also be meeting with my counterparts in all four countries. In addition, we'll be talking to representatives of the NGO (non-governmental organization) community and in particular, faith [religious] community representatives, who are

actually working to implement part of President Bush's emergency plan for AIDS relief."

[The Bush initiative will provide \$15 billion over five years to prevent 7 million new HIV infections, provide treatment to 2 million HIV-positive people and care for 10 million people living with the AIDS and children orphaned by the disease. The assistance program is intended for 14 nations especially hard hit by AIDS -- 12 in sub-Saharan Africa.]

"After this trip the Secretary [Thompson] and I will have visited all 12 countries in sub-Saharan Africa covered under the President's program," Allen added.

The official said he would be emphasizing private-sector partnerships to fund grassroots health projects at all his stops and was therefore making the trip in conjunction with the African Development Foundation (ADF), on whose board he formerly served. ADF was established by Congress in 1980 and has funded over 1,400 grass-roots development projects on the continent.

"It is important to understand the linkage and role that economic development plays in improving the health outcomes of African people throughout the continent," Allen said.

"One of the passions I have, and why I go back to Africa so often, is because I do see a direct link, in many ways, between how HIV/AIDS affects women and children there and how the disease impacts those same groups domestically [in the U.S.], and what can be done to close the health gap that still exists in America."

Allen said he was especially concerned about the impact of disease on women in Africa "because as you impact women in society in Africa, you not only affect that generation but the next and succeeding generations as the diseases can be transmitted to children through them."

"So this is a vital issue to us. We are working to prevent transmission of HIV/AIDS from mother to child," he added.

Allen was also excited about the prospects of sharing best practices for dealing with the epidemic from Africa. He cited the success story of Uganda where the HIV infection rates have dropped dramatically in part because of President Museveni's focus on abstinence and behavior change to complement condom use and education programs.

But Africa has other models, Allen said, including "Malawi and Zambia, which are lowering their [HIV infections] rates. Senegal also has a low rate. I've witnessed and seen where focussing on behavior change, personal choices, lifestyle and protecting ones self and [sexual] partner from transmission are all key to success in the battle not only against AIDS but also tuberculosis, malaria and other opportunistic infections.

"This is an exciting and new phenomenon for us," the U.S. official said. "We've always focused on what America can teach the world. There is much that we can give to assist Africa, but there is also much we can learn from the successes in Africa itself."

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF303 01/14/2004

Natsios Sees New Phase Beginning in War Against HIV/AIDS
(U.S. international aid chief outlines what is to come) (2730)

The international effort to combat the global HIV/AIDS pandemic is about to enter a new phase, said the administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in a January 14 Washington speech.

Andrew Natsios said the U.S. Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Act of 2003, the largest treatment program ever proposed in the 20-year history of the epidemic, is the key policy initiative launching this new chapter in public health initiatives to address the epidemic. "I am more optimistic now that the conditions are right to slow the pandemic," he told an audience at the Academy for Educational Development, a human and social development organization.

First proposed by President Bush in January 2003 and later approved by Congress, the new law targets 14 countries where the epidemic is at its worst. The new program aims to prevent 7 million new HIV infections, including HIV transmission between mothers and newborns; treat 2 million people living with HIV/AIDS with anti-retroviral therapy; and care for 10 million HIV-infected individuals and AIDS orphans.

The United States plans to devote approximately \$2.4 billion to first-year implementation of the five-year plan. Final appropriation still awaits Congressional approval.

One of the things learned in the many years of U.S. support for HIV/AIDS prevention programs, Natsios said, is that efforts to change the high-risk behaviors that transmit the disease have been very successful.

In Africa, the USAID administrator said, HIV/AIDS programs must also recognize the important social standing of religious leaders and their capability to help in promotion of disease prevention programs. "To ignore them, is to ignore an enormous resource," Natsios said.

The overarching strategy proposed in the new law is known as ABC, which stands for Abstinence, Be Faithful and Condom Use, when necessary. This approach is modeled on one taken in Uganda which has been one of the few nations to contain the spread of the disease and reverse its occurrence in the population. Natsios said USAID made 230 million condoms available in 2002 and 480 million in 2003.

Natsios tempered his hopeful outlook about new strategies to contain the disease with a note of caution as well. In a departure from his prepared remarks, he expressed concern that the nascent peace now ending a 20-year civil war in Sudan could bring a re-opening of intercontinental highways that may act as routes of disease transmission. In other areas of Africa, sexual contact between commercial truckers and prostitutes has been a significant source of HIV transmission.

Following is the text of the Natsios speech as prepared for delivery:

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

Andrew S. Natsios

Administrator, US Agency for International Development

Moving to the Next Phase in HIV Prevention

January 14, 2004

Thank you. I am pleased to be here at the Academy for Education Development and have the chance to discuss what the Bush Administration and the US Agency for International Development are doing to fight HIV/AIDS.

Introduction

The scope of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is of terrifying proportions: every six seconds another person becomes infected. Some 8,500 people a day are dying. That is almost three Nine Elevens [September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks] every single day.

The absolute urgency of containing and ultimately defeating the HIV/AIDS pandemic is one of the defining issues of our era. It is, as President Bush has said, "a moral imperative."

"Fighting AIDS on a global scale," the President has said, "is a massive and complicated undertaking. Yet, this cause is rooted in the simplest of moral duties. When we see this kind of preventable suffering, when we see a plague leaving graves and orphans across a continent, we must act. When we see the wounded traveler on the road to Jericho, we will not, America will not, pass to the other side of the road."

But it is not only a question of being a Good Samaritan, important as that is to a country such as ours, whose tradition of private and public humanitarian assistance goes back to the earliest days of our republic. It is also a question of clear and overwhelming national interest - even national security interest when one considers the potential impact of HIV/AIDS in such places as India, China and Russia.

We are seeing countries now in Africa where more than a third of the adults are infected. That means huge numbers of the most productive people these countries have are either sick or care for those who are. And it leaves children and the elderly to tend the fields and shops and do whatever they can to keep their families going.

We can only assume that the prospects for sustainable economic growth under these circumstances are greatly compromised. We have a growing concern that in the displacement, chaos and disruption of the wars in Sudan and Liberia, the disease may spread more rapidly. Our ability to monitor the spread of the disease in these circumstances is limited. But as the President has said, HIV/AIDS "is a terrible disease, but it is not a hopeless disease."

We now have the right leadership an enormous increase in funding thanks to the President, the right organizational structure in this new office in the State Department and the right strategy which is field-driven and technically based. I am more optimistic now that the conditions are right to slow the pandemic.

I believe the President has made an inspired choice in Randy Tobias as the USG's HIV/AIDS Coordinator to lead this effort.

The technical leader within USAID on this massive effort is Dr. Anne Peterson, the head of our Global Health Bureau. Anne's understanding of the complex medical issues facing the developing world and her experience in Africa at the grassroots level, with faith-based and community approaches have made her a genuine asset to USAID and the US Government. Our regional bureaus, particularly Africa, are well led. Connie Newman is arguably the best manager and leader the Africa Bureau has ever had, according to many career officers.

We are also very fortunate to be working hand-in-hand with over 50 organizations, including our hosts today, AED, that are helping us deliver solid service in the field and develop the new techniques and strategies that will define our approaches in the future.

The three main points

I would like now to turn to the main focus of my remarks and make three main points:

--First is to discuss the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the unprecedented commitment the President has made to fighting the pandemic;

--Second, to highlight USAID's role in this process;

--And third, to discuss the focus and direction of HIV/AIDS prevention activities supported by USAID within and outside of the Emergency Plan focus countries.

The President's Record

When President Bush took office, US spending on international HIV/AIDS totaled about \$400 million. This was far more than any other country was doing, but clearly unequal to the task of containing - let alone defeating - the pandemic.

Nobody saw that more clearly than the President and Secretary of State Colin Powell. As the Secretary said at the UN General Assembly in June of 2001, "I know of no enemy in war more insidious or vicious than AIDS, an enemy that poses a clear and present danger to the world. The war against AIDS has no front line. We must wage it on every front. And only an integrated approach makes sense, an approach that emphasizes prevent and public education. But it also must include treatment, care for orphans, measures to stop mother-to-child transmission, affordable drugs, delivery systems and infrastructure, medical training. And, of course, it must include research into vaccines and a cure."

Doing that is a tall order. But that is precisely what the Administration has done. And the President and Congress have given us the resources to do it.

By Fiscal Year 2002, the Administration was putting more than \$1.2 billion into the fight against the HIV. That figure rose again in FY '03, reaching \$1.629. And in FY '04 we expect it to top \$2 billion. No other country comes even close to that level of commitment. But that is hardly the full extent of it.

From day one, the United States has been the largest donor to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria that President Bush and Kofi Annan announced at the Rose Garden in 2001.

In June 2002, the President took another bold and compassionate step with the International Mother and Child HIV Prevention Initiative. This has been focused on two areas: preventing transmission of AIDS from mothers to their babies and care to keep the mothers alive and reduce the number of orphans. This includes expanding drug treatments and building stronger health care systems so that as many women as possible can be reached.

Then last year, the President went even further, launching the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, a visionary program to increase HIV/AIDS spending to \$3 billion annually by FY '08.

The President's Emergency Plan

As you know, the President's Emergency Plan focuses on the 14 countries that together are home to 50 percent of those living with HIV and AIDS. It has three key goals:

--Providing ARV (anti-retroviral) treatment to 2 million people

--Preventing 7 million new infections

--And caring for 10 million people living with AIDS or are affected by it, including orphans and other vulnerable children.

USAID's role

USAID has had a major role to play in each of these presidential initiatives, and thanks to the resources the President and Congress have made available to us, we have expanded our programs and pioneered a number of new ideas. Accordingly, our budget for HIV/AIDS has grown from \$433 million in FY '01 to \$510 million in FY '02 and \$795 million in FY '03.

At the same time, we will continue to be an implementing agency, facilitating the work of the Global AIDS Coordinator's office. We are very pleased that the Coordinator is following a field based approach. Within the technical framework established in legislation and by the Coordinator's office, leadership has been delegated to field missions, where interagency collaboration among all USG actors is flourishing. We in USAID have always considered the field to be our particular strength.

There have been many aspects to our work since we began our HIV/AIDS programs in 1986. Many of you in the audience have worked with us and deserve considerable credit for what we have achieved. Still, the threat the virus poses is such that we are always seeking new partners -- companies, foundations, NGOs, and colleges and universities with whom we can work and share expertise, experience and resources.

The point of these partnerships, as Randy Tobias recently said, is "to engender new leadership and commitment and to leverage the competitive strengths of different partners."

One of USAID's new partners is Coca-Cola, one of the largest employers in Africa, with whom we are working in 56 African countries to ensure that staff and their families are fully aware of the resources available for AIDS prevention, care and treatment.

Another partnership is with Catholic Relief Services, CARE, and others to provide food assistance to 29,000 people a month in Rwanda. Among the key recipients are child-headed households, children orphaned by AIDS and families with HIV-positive members. This food aid is also linked tied in with other education and income-generating activities.

An important and evolving aspect of our work is on Mother-to-Child Prevention. This past July, I was in Haiti to witness the start-up of a \$4 million Mother-to-Child Transmission Prevention program there.

As part of that program, five new faith-based centers will be opened that offer Mother-to-Child prevention services. Through the Haitian Ministry of Health 48 voluntary counseling and testing centers will have these services, too.

The ABC Model

The topic of this meeting is "The Next Phase of HIV Prevention." What have we learned from our many years of support to HIV/AIDS prevention programs?

First, we have learned that behavior change is possible and that we can reduce, if not completely eliminate, high risk behavior in all groups (youth, adults, high risk groups). And, second, we have learned how to design effective messages to address all groups.

It has been widely perceived that USAID promotes condom use to the exclusion of other behavior change approaches. This is not true. Balance is the key to our behavior change approach, or as it is commonly known, the ABC strategy.

Our strategy in large part evolved from our long and pioneering work with President Museveni and the Government of Uganda. I was particularly struck by a comment made by President Museveni on one of his recent trips to Washington, that behavior change approaches were the only way he could empower his people to address the catastrophic impact HIV/AIDS was wreaking in Uganda in the absence of other available resources (drugs, diagnostics, and even condoms at the beginning.)

According to US Census Bureau and UNAIDS estimates, Uganda's HIV/AIDS prevalence rate peaked during the early 1990s at around 15 percent. But by 2001, it had dropped to only five percent. Why? The evidence suggests that this precipitous drop has been due to major, positive behavior change in all three ABC categories.

First is increased abstinence, including deferral and considerably reduced levels of sexual activity among youth.

Second is increased faithfulness and a reduction in the number of partners among the adult population -- sometimes known as "zero grazing" in Uganda -- as well as increased condom use by casual partners.

As a recent USAID report states, "the most significant of these appear to be faithfulness or partner reduction behaviors by Ugandan men and women, whose reported casual sex encounters declined by well over 50 percent between 1989 and 1995.... Uganda's successful combination of ABC strategies was rooted in a community-based national response in which both the governmental and non-governmental sectors (including faith-based, women's and other grassroots organizations) succeeded at reaching different population groups with different messages and interventions appropriate to their need and ability to respond."

Stigma reduction and active and effective political leadership are also key elements in Uganda's success story. And we are beginning to see similar results in countries like Zambia.

Condoms clearly need to be a part of the equation, especially for high risk populations. So we have been increasing their availability worldwide. Shipments increased from 233 million in 2002 to nearly 480 million condoms in 2003.

There are some five million new cases of HIV every year. According to the National Institutes for Health, it could take at least 20 years before we have an effective vaccine available. So it is imperative that we build solid strategies, based on experience, solid science and the best practices that exist.

New Trends in Prevention

I would like to conclude by pointing to some other ideas we are working on:

--Because of their effectiveness, we are scaling up our ABC programs to national levels wherever possible.

--Putting more emphasis on youth and expanding our abstinence and behavior change programs. To this effect, we put a Request for Proposals in December. The response has been overwhelming, and we hope to have that new program finalized within the month.

--Developing new technologies, such as microbicides, to empower women and prevent HIV/AIDS transmission; and new technologies that facilitate prevention and treatment, like simple blister packets to administer drugs to newborns in Mother-to-Child transmission programs.

--Reinvigorating programs to prevent the medical transmission of HIV, improved blood banking, and improved medical protocols.

-Continuing active operations research to determine best practices in all aspects of HIV/AIDS programming, including prevention, ARV treatment, links with nutrition, food and water, and programs for vulnerable groups.

The scope of this pandemic and the strength of the President's response are such that we will continue to need to count on strong partners like AED and all of you assembled here, as well as look to the new partnerships we are forming. We look forward to our work together over the next year.

Thank you.

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AEF304 01/14/2004

7.2 Million Ethiopians Still Need Food Aid Despite Good Harvest in 2003

(FAO/WFP report says figure is down from 13.2 million last year) (540)

Well-distributed seasonal rains coupled with seed support programs helped Ethiopia record fewer hungry people in 2003 than the year before, as the result of an upsurge in grain production. But 7.2 million Ethiopians still need help meeting minimum food requirements in 2004, two United Nations agencies report.

A joint January 14 Food and Agriculture Organization/World Food Program report stressed "the need for effective price stabilization" and recommended the use of local purchases as the main tool for securing cereals and pulses for food aid programs in the coming year.

Following is the text of an FAO/WFP news release based on the report:

WASHINGTON/ROME - Despite a good harvest, 7.2 million people still require assistance to meet minimum food requirements in 2004, according to a joint report released today by two United Nations agencies. Last year, 13.2 million Ethiopians needed food assistance.

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) report, "Well-distributed seasonal rains that began on time and continued until late September/October in the main production areas resulted in an upsurge of grain production in the 2003 meher [June to September] season."

Seed support programs helped ensure access to seeds in most regions and increased use of improved seed and fertilizer also contributed to "the marked improvement in yields over last year."

National cereal and pulse production in the meher season is forecast at 13.05 million metric tons, about 46 percent above 2002/03 and 11 percent above the last five years average. The report says the overall agricultural performance in 2003 was much better than last year, primarily due to favorable weather conditions. Incentives to invest were also greater following higher prices since November 2002.

Much better rainfall in the central highlands and in the north-eastern pastoral areas and improved livestock condition reduced livestock mortality rates and removed the need for early migration of herds and flocks, according to the report.

Despite these overall improvements, the report estimates that Ethiopia will still need 980 000 metric tons of food relief for 2004, compared with 1.8 million tons in 2003. It estimates the total grain import requirements in 2004 at 210 000 metric tons of which 50 000 are expected to be imported commercially. Confirmed food aid commitments stand at 160 000 metric tons.

Following the poor harvest in 2002/03 grain prices rose sharply and have remained high compared to the same period last year owing to a reduced supply on the market. However, says the report, the prospects of a good crop this year are expected to cause prices to decline once the harvest comes in.

Such severe price volatility hurts producers as well as consumers. The report says, "the need for effective price stabilization can not be overemphasized" and recommends the use of local purchases as the main tool for securing cereals and pulses for food aid programs in the coming year.

The report is based on the findings of a joint FAO/WFP mission that visited Ethiopia from 5 November to 6 December 2003.

(Distributed by the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF503 01/16/2004

Refugees from 24 African Nations Admitted to U.S. in 2003

(Ceiling for 2004 increases by 5,000) (550)

Refugees from 24 African countries were admitted to the United States in 2003. The U.S. State Department issued a fact sheet January 16 saying that the ceiling for admissions has been raised in 2004 to 25,000.

Following is the State Department fact sheet:

(begin fact sheet)

U.S. Department of State

Fact Sheet

Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

Washington, DC

January 16, 2004

Refugee Admissions Program for Africa

Background

Since 1980, over 138,000 African refugees have been admitted to the United States for permanent resettlement. Most were Somali (over 43,000) or Ethiopian (over 37,000), but the number also includes Sudanese, Liberians, Congolese, Rwandans, Sierra Leoneans, and Angolans, among others. In recent years, the program has grown more diverse both in terms of nationalities admitted to the United States and processing locations. In FY 2003, refugees from 24 African countries were admitted to the United States.

The majority of refugee admissions processing in Africa are coordinated by the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, with the assistance of a Joint Voluntary Agency (JVA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and by the U.S. Embassy in Accra, with the assistance of an Overseas Processing Entity (OPE) and IOM. Processing in sub-Saharan Africa takes place during circuit rides originating at our two regional centers in Accra and Nairobi and is the result of careful coordination among the UNHCR (for identification of refugees and processing and logistical support on site), OPE/JVA (for case preparation), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) (for adjudication), and IOM (for post-adjudication processing, cultural orientation and travel arrangements).

The U.S. program also processes African refugees in Cairo, and since FY 1999, the program has expanded significantly at this site, primarily to address the needs of Sudanese and other refugees in Egypt.

FY 2004 Admissions Program

The U.S. admissions program for FY 2004 includes a ceiling of 25,000 admissions from Africa, an increase of 5,000 over last year's ceiling and 50% of the total regional ceilings approved by the President for the year. The partners in the U.S. Refugee Program, including U.S. Government agencies, NGOs, UNHCR, and IOM, are working together to identify new groups in need of resettlement and to process the greatest possible number of refugees for admission. Much of this effort is focused in Africa. Refugees of any nationality in Africa are eligible for referral to the program by UNHCR or a U.S. Embassy. The United States also identifies and designates as eligible for resettlement processing specific groups of special humanitarian concern to the United States. Such groups are defined in concert with the UNHCR, DHS, NGOs, and other experts.

The family reunification element of the Africa program for

FY 2004 applies to spouses, unmarried sons and daughters under age 21, and parents of persons who were admitted to the United States as refugees or asylees and who are nationals of the following countries: Burundi, Congo-Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DROC), Liberia, Somalia, and Sudan. For consideration for family reunification under these guidelines, a qualified relative in the United States may file an Affidavit of Relationship with one of the affiliate offices of participating resettlement organizations.

(end fact sheet)

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AEF201 01/06/2004

New U.S. Entry Procedures Enhance Security, Preserve Welcoming Spirit

(US-VISIT program launched January 5) (830)

By Lale Kuyumcu

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The U.S. government has implemented new entry procedures for visa-bearing visitors to the United States to enhance U.S. national security while preserving America's welcoming spirit.

The procedures, which went into effect January 5 at 115 airports and 14 seaports in the United States, involve two additional steps to the entry process -- making digital fingerprints of the visitors' left and right index fingers and taking a digital photograph of them. The procedures add about 15 seconds to the entry process. The procedures apply to international travelers requiring visas to enter the United States.

The new procedures, called the US-VISIT (United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology) program, were developed and implemented by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

"US-VISIT is a new tool that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is providing to our front line officers to make sure that we are doing everything we can to enhance national security while preserving our nation's welcoming spirit," said Robert Mocny, deputy director of US-VISIT, at a live demonstration of the program at Washington Dulles International Airport outside Washington January 5.

"America has been and always will be a welcoming country," added Mocny.

Deputy Commissioner of Customs and Border Protection Douglass Browning said the new procedures are "the greatest advance in primary inspection in three decades."

The US-VISIT program will intensify focus on at-risk travelers while facilitating the entry of people who pose low or no risk, said Browning. "At the same time the program will insure the integrity of the immigration system and safeguard the privacy of visitors to our country," he said.

Mocny said the information gathered will be divulged only to authorized officials on a need-to-know basis and will be governed by the Privacy Act at all times.

"In fact, US-VISIT actually helps protect the privacy of our visitors against identity theft through lost or stolen travel documents," said Mocny.

Many of the arrival procedures remained unchanged such as presenting travel documents like a passport and a visa and answering specific questions regarding the visitor's stay in the United States.

Mocny said the US-VISIT program has provisions to protect the

privacy of travelers who object to having their pictures taken in public because of religious and other reasons.

The procedures took "no time at all," said Tom Santo of the United Kingdom, a passenger on an incoming flight, who is employed in the United States on a working visa.

The added security measures are "no big deal to me," said Ralph Huppi of Switzerland, who travels to the United States for work several times a month. "If it helps security, it's the right thing to do."

International travelers are shown an informational video and receive handouts onboard the plane prior to arrival. In addition, more information is provided at the immigration inspection station at the airport.

The biometric information of visa holders is obtained when the visas are issued and is verified at the travelers' point of entry into the United States. The biometric information is especially useful in screening travelers with the same names and similar biographical data as known and suspected terrorists and criminals, U.S. officials say.

In addition to enhancing security, the US-VISIT program reduces fraud, facilitates legitimate travel and trade, and safeguards the personal privacy of visitors. Mocny said gathering biometric information will be the trend for international travel in the near future.

The DHS says US-VISIT procedures apply to all visitors with nonimmigrant visas between the ages of 14 and 79, with exceptions for specific classes of diplomats and some other officials. U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents (green card holders) are not included in the program.

Citizens of the 27 visa waiver countries, who enter the United States for visits of 90 days or less, do not need a U.S. visa and therefore do not fall under the US-VISIT program.

Visitors who may be required to register under the U.S. National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) will be notified directly by an immigration officer at the primary inspection station in the airport according to Shonnie Lyon, Director of Implementation Management for US-VISIT. Currently a visitor will either "fall under the US-VISIT process or NSEERS. It will not be both."

The DHS says US-VISIT's entry and exit procedures will eventually replace the more cumbersome registration requirements of the NSEERS program.

The first day of the US-VISIT program implementation also marked the beginning of a pilot program in exit procedures. A departure confirmation program using automated kiosks is being tested at Baltimore-Washington International Airport and at selected Miami Seaport cruise line terminals. US-VISIT officials will evaluate and consider other alternatives including hand held devices for departure confirmation throughout 2004, according to Lyon.

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New Regulations to Reduce Terrorist Threat to Shipping and Ports

(Experts address maritime security issues at Africa Oil and Gas Forum) (1150)

By Charles W. Corey

Washington File Staff Writer

Houston -- Security is the single most important issue now facing the international maritime industry because ocean-going ships have become a "vector for terrorism," warns international maritime expert Frank J. Gonynor.

Gonynor, an internationally acclaimed maritime lawyer and author of many articles on the maritime industry, told those attending the second annual Corporate Council on Africa's Oil and Gas Forum in Houston, Texas recently, that times have changed dramatically for ocean-going ships worldwide in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attack on the United States.

Gonynor was addressing the topic "Maritime Security: Africa and Beyond" at a conference workshop, along with Russell Whitmarsh, security department manager with the Port of Houston, and Jesse W. Lewis Jr., a senior international maritime security consultant with the international risk management company, Kroll. The three outlined the security concerns that threaten shipping and ports worldwide and that could have major impact on the oil and gas industry.

Gonynor reminded everyone of the ramming of the French oil tanker Limburg in the Arabian Sea on October 6, 2002 by what was believed to be a small explosive-packed boat. The attack caused major fire and explosive damage to the ship, blowing a hole into its double-sided hull and spilling 90,000 barrels of oil into the Gulf of Aden.

Security is important to the international maritime industry, Gonynor told his audience because "ocean shipping cannot be talked about in a vacuum.

"Sooner or later, a ship has to make land. It has to deliver, discharge and load cargo, so it doesn't just involve the oceans of the world but involves the ports of the world -- and the nations that operate the ports of

the world." For that reason, he said, the overwhelming need for security and the ability to thwart terrorist attacks at all major ports worldwide "echoes throughout the entire economic system of the world."

New International Maritime Organization regulations that take effect in July 2004, he said, will greatly impact security all across the industry because those regulations impose several modifications on the international shipping industry.

The new regulations will require that an automatic identification system be placed on ships so that a ship's location can be plotted at any moment in the event of an onboard emergency, including a terrorist attack, he said.

Also under the new laws, Gonynor explained, all major ships will have provide a synopsis record of all movements, ports of call and cargoes and ownership of all ships will have to be detailed so full transparency in this area can be achieved.

"They (international maritime authorities) don't want to know just the names of the owning company, they want to know the background of the principals. What do they own and what do they do? Who is above them?" he said. They now require a "very deep, detailed, hierarchal picture of the true ownership of a vessel."

"Is this really possible?" Gonynor asked rhetorically. His own answer pointed to the difficulties in pulling together this broad picture of the shipping industry.

Historically, Gonynor said many ships are privately owned and their companies have been very reluctant to release much public information, for both tax and competitive reasons. "It is an entrenched culture of confidentiality that is going to have to be changed," he stressed, throughout the entire shipping industry.

Ships must also have a silent alarm or panic button installed in at least two places onboard, he said, so it can be activated in case of a terrorist attack. The new regulations do not spell out what happens after an alarm is set off, he said, asking "What happens then? Who will be responsible for the subsequent actions that will needed to be taken" to respond to the alarm?

There will also be three distinct levels of security: Level One, minimum but secure; Level Two, a heightened risk of incident; and Level Three; which defines a finite period during which an incident is expected to happen, he said, and this eliminates the old non-secure baseline on which all previous alerts were based.

"The first level is a higher degree than has ever been experienced before in the maritime world," he said. "Security is continuous and mandatory. It is not reactive but prophylactic. It must be preventative."

The United States government, he told his audience, has strongly pushed the adoption of these new maritime security laws and has also evaluated the security levels of a broad array of international ports. Those that fail to meet the new standards, he said, will be given 90 days to upgrade or face the possible consequence that cargo and ships coming from or passing through those ports would be denied entry at U.S. ports.

With the current threat of terrorism so high worldwide, Gonynor said "we are now in a situation that makes operations challenging, interesting and expensive." The new security environment and regulations have thus changed the new international shipping environment forever, he said.

Fellow panelist Russell Whitmarsh, who directs security for the Port of Houston, reinforced that point, describing the implementation of the new maritime laws as a "tough job" both for the shipping lines and for the ports their ships visit.

Ports like Houston, he said, which is a 53-mile (85 kilometer) channel that ranks as the world's sixth largest port, were originally designed (often many years ago) for the movement of cargo and to facilitate the free flow of commerce and so were designed with little or no impediments to deter that process.

Prior to September 11, Whitmarsh said, port authorities were concerned with "petty theft, accidents and safety issues."

Now besides general security, he said, port officials must also deal with credentialing systems, installing perimeter fencing and barriers in places where it never existed before, installing gate systems, access controls, and enhancing communications, surveillance and intelligence gathering. "All of this," he said, "will have a tremendous impact" on international shipping lines and the ports in which they operate.

A third workshop speaker, Jesse W. Lewis Jr., a senior consultant on maritime security with Kroll agreed that maritime security is "with us to stay" and must be accepted as factor of in the everyday life of the ports and shipping industry. The September 11 terrorist attack on the United States, he said, "destroyed any illusion that we are safe in a world in which there are people who want to attack human life and property."

For that reason, he said, "It is very important for shipping companies to forge a very close relationship with intelligence and law enforcement agencies," to protect their vessels and operations. That is "absolutely fundamental" he said, "for without them, you just cannot exist."

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